



TROJAN TODAY

YOUR SCHOOL TOWN OF HIGHLAND SOURCE FOR NEWS AND EVENTS | DECEMBER 2018

Healthy meals. Healthy minds.

A lively Nutrition Services web portal has debuted on the School Town of Highland site, showcasing healthy nutrition and tools that make smart food choices easier.

It's the first of several changes planned to make eating at the schools more fun.

From the Smart Snacks calculator to better food options for maximizing athletic performance and fitness, Food Services Director Lisa Hayes said educational components are now part of the same site where parents pre-pay for their children's school lunches.

"The portal was created to be more interactive, to help parents know why we create the menus we do and how we are working to make lunch fun for their kids," said Hayes, who began work in Highland in May. "We also provide more information in an easy-to-locate, one-stop shop."

More recently, middle and high school students taste-tested new foods. The great news: student favorite Wild Mike's pizza should be available in December. ♦

FUEL FOR LEARNING

Did you know our schools offer a healthy breakfast as well as lunch? Students receive high-quality meals with many choices, including whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables.

PREPAID MEALS

Every student has the option of purchasing food on a prepaid account. Parents can pay online and review food purchases.

MEAL ASSISTANCE

The School Town of Highland offers free and reduced-meal assistance.

INFORMATION

Visit www.highland.k12.in.us and click on the Food Services link for menus, online payment info, assistance applications, nutrition info and more.



CURRICULUM

Elearning allows students to work from home during inclement weather

After a year of planning, the School Town of Highland's first eLearning Day was met with overwhelming enthusiasm from students – and their parents.

Superintendent Brian Smith said that positive first experience sets the stage for future eLearning days – either for professional development for teachers or inclement weather.

As part of eLearning, students complete their school day from the comfort of home using their district-supplied tablet with easy access to teachers. Students who don't have access to the internet while out of school have three days to complete assignments.

A district purchase that put an iPad in the hands of every student made electronic learning the next best step to advance continuity in education.

"We plan to make fall voting an eLearning day going forward and reserve our other designated distance learning for days when weather would ordinarily force us to cancel classes," Smith said.

The practice has been growing in Indiana since it was introduced in 2011. It was an eLearning grant and state approval earlier this year that set the wheels in motion for Highland.

"Distance learning gives us options we didn't have before," Smith said.

"We believe that keeping kids learning on snow days will be better for them and for families, who will be able to plan early June vacations knowing make-up days won't interfere." ♦

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SCHOOL BOARD

Carol Green Fraley, President

Patrick Krull, Vice President

Luanne Jurczak, Secretary

Victor Garcia, Member

Robert Kuva, Member

The school board meets the third Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. in the Administration Building, 9145 Kennedy Avenue, Highland.

INFO: Visit hhs.highland.k12.in.us for the latest information, including meeting agendas, school policies, board mission, beliefs and values.

School Town of Highland is looking for qualified substitute nurses, clinical aids

No matter how many school nurses and paraprofessionals Highland and the Northwest Indiana Special Education Cooperative hire, Superintendent Brian Smith said it never seems to be enough.

"Every district I know is looking for school nurses and classroom assistants," Smith said. "It's the same case here. We get great candidates who want to work a couple of days a month and that's just fine.

"We want to work with people who want to work with us."

Individuals with the skills who love working with children are encouraged to apply for a position that provides scheduling flexibility, good pay and the opportunity to make a positive impact in a great workplace. ♦

QUESTIONS? Please contact Kathy Grzynski at Central Office at (219) 924-7400.

TO APPLY: If you are interested in subbing on days you are available, please visit the School Town of Highland website – highland.k12.in.us – and click on Employment Opportunities to apply.



PARAPROFESSIONALS NEEDED

The Northwest Indiana Special Education Cooperative is looking for qualified paraprofessionals to join its dynamic team. Professional and energetic adults are encouraged to apply. No prior experience is required.

NISEC has openings at all grade levels – elementary, middle and high school. The job offers competitive rates and benefits.

INFORMATION: For more information or to apply, please visit www.nisec.org or call (219) 769-4000.

LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

"Two of our newest instructors are leading new extracurricular opportunities with high school robotics, Speech and Debate"



As you browse this issue of Trojan Today, I hope you will take the time to read about just a few of the new and resurrected extracurriculars that are exciting our students while expanding their horizons.

I have to confess, I get as pumped up about these opportunities as they do. As educators, we really never know what new opportunity will pique a child's interest, foster relationships with their peers, influence their career choices – or all three.

I have long believed that every opportunities we can find to engage our kids is worth every bit of effort we put into it. Extracurriculars have the potential to create excited, well-rounded students. Our educator mentors are doing just that.

High school robotics along with Speech and Debate are just two of the new offerings.

Not-so-coincidentally, these after-school groups are being led by two of our newest instructors – Rodney Glenn and Eve Polivka.

These two teachers are passionate about what they teach and the fledgling clubs they lead. We are lucky to have them.

We are just as lucky to have High School Principal Dr. Patrick Weil, who takes the time to explore the interests of our incoming teachers as part of their interviews.

This is just another example of what working well looks like at the School Town of Highland.

Brian Smith
Superintendent
School Town of Highland

Speech and Debate

AT HIGHLAND HIGH SCHOOL

When Social Studies Teacher Eve Polivka joined the staff at Highland High, she hit the ground running, issuing a callout in October for a newly forming speech and debate team that would participate in its first meet at Bishop Noll in November.

Her ambitious plans paid off! The core group of seven had a solid showing in dramatic interpretation, oratory, impromptu and Socratic Seminars.

"We went into this with the idea of learning something new – and we did," she said.

"The students saw how their performance compared to some of Indiana's shining stars and know what they need to do to get better when we compete again in January and February."

Polivka already sees improving communication skills emerging.

"These kids are learning how they can use effective communication to make a difference," she said.

"This team is passionate about the world in which they live. Speech and Debate offers them a way to make sense of their world."

THINK YOU'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES?

Stop by the social studies department and see Ms. Polivka for details on the newly formed Speech and Debate team or email epolivka@highland.k12.in.us.



Head Swimming Coach Nick Castillo (left) has been working with Ethan Churilla to become one of Indiana's elite swimmers since the now-senior was just 10 years old.

Trojan swimmer making waves in and out of pool

The night before college recruiters are allowed to email or text high school athletes, Ethan Churilla went to bed hoping to hear from two schools.

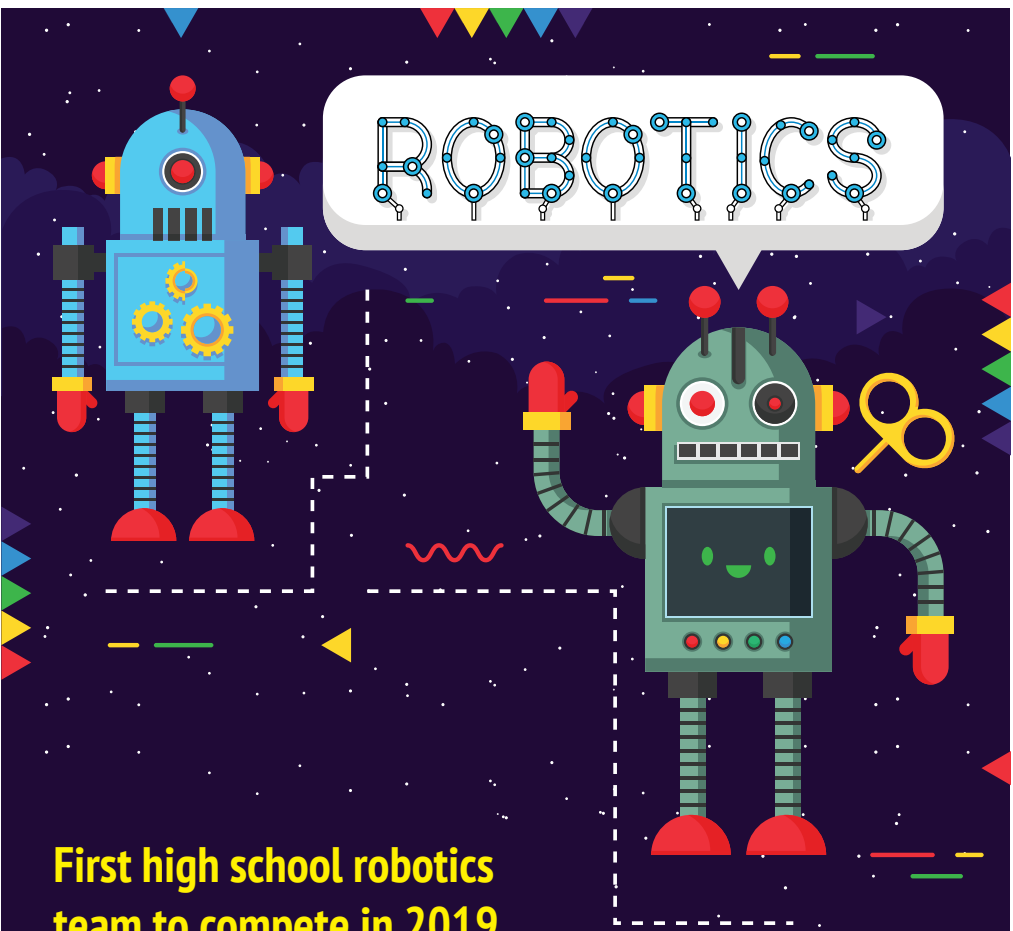
Instead, the high school senior woke up to offers from dozens upon dozens of universities both large and small, all interested in recruiting the state's leading 50 freestyler.

"I seriously was hoping there would be a couple of emails," he said. "I had never been through anything like this before. There were schools I had never heard of that were offering me an opportunity. It was nice to be wanted."

Site visits at his favorites helped Churilla decide on Northwestern, where he will study computer science and swim with a team that is rebuilding in the Big 10 conference.

"This is the best decision for me at this place in my life. My goal has always been to live life to the fullest and I feel like I'm doing that," he said. "When classes started in August, it felt like senior year would last forever, but it is flying by so fast."

"I just want to enjoy Highland High and all that happens in these moments from now until graduation when it will be time to take the next step." ♦



ROBOTICS

First high school robotics team to compete in 2019

Once the only region high school without a robotics contingent, Highland is now fielding a team that will build and name its first robot in preparation for competitions in March.

"Today, I teach principals of engineering at the high school. Before this, I worked in manufacturing, creating and building things," Rodney Glenn said. "While interviewing for this position, I was approached about starting a robotics team. I couldn't have been happier."

When robotics teams from Munster and Hammond heard Highland was creating a program, Glenn said they stepped forward with offers of assistance to become more familiar with the IndianaFIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) competitions.

"They encouraged our team and answered questions from parents at our initial meeting," he said. "We are scheduled to be the only rookie team at these competitions. Our goal between now and then is to get our feet planted, develop our ideas and work through them."

UPCOMING COMPETITIONS

Come out and cheer on the high school robotics team in its upcoming IndianaFIRST competitions.

MARCH 9-10

IndianaFIRST District St. Joseph Event

Penn High School
56100 N. Bittersweet Road
Mishawaka, IN 46545

MARCH 29-30

IndianaFIRST District Center Grove Event

Center Grove High School
27175 Morgantown Road
Greenwood, IN 46143

INFO: Learn more about IndianaFIRST as well as competition details at www.indianafirst.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Join us as we celebrate the sounds of the season with instrumentals provided by our high school and middle school bands and orchestras.

WHEN: 6:30 p.m. December 18

WHERE: Monbeck Auditorium at Highland High School, 9135 Erie St.

ADMISSION: Free

INFO: Call (219) 922-5610.

HOLIDAY CHORALE

The high school and middle school choirs will rock the auditorium as they perform your favorite holiday tunes — and ours — accompanied by the lively sounds of the school's very own jazz band.

WHEN: 6:30 p.m. December 7

WHERE: Monbeck Auditorium at Highland High School, 9135 Erie St.

ADMISSION: Free

INFO: Call (219) 922-5610.

MADRIGAL FEASTE

The Highland Performing Arts Boosters will present a Madrigal Feaste with all the pomp and circumstance of a royal feast.

WHEN: 6 p.m. December 15 and 4:30 p.m. December 16

WHERE: Monbeck Auditorium at Highland High School, 9135 Erie St.

ADMISSION: Tickets are \$30 for adults, \$10 for children under 5 not eating and may be purchased online at www.hpabi.org.

HOLIDAY POPS

The spirit of the Holidays comes alive at this festive concert. The Northwest Indiana Symphony orchestra and chorus will celebrate the season with traditional and contemporary favorites. Sing along to beloved carols and keep an eye out for visitors from the North Pole.

WHEN: 7:30 p.m. December 13

WHERE: Monbeck Auditorium at Highland High School, 9135 Erie St.

ADMISSION: Tickets are \$10-\$73 and may be purchased online at nisorchestra.org or call (219) 836-0525, ext. 200.